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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INFORMATION SERVICE

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

For Immediate Release AUGUST 24, 1950

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION WORK EXPANDED ON INDIAN RESERVATIONS

Expansion of activities to conserve fish and game resources on Indian reservations was announced today by Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman.

The work is aimed not only at providing food and sport for Indian residents, but also to bring funds into tribal treasuries from sale of hunting, fishing and other recreational privileges to the general public. These funds, in turn, may be partly used to carry on wildlife management projects.

One of the current wildlife management projects is reestablishment of the once important wild fowl nesting area in and around Burford Lake on the Jicarilla Apache Reservation in New Mexico. This area is on the central north-south flyway of migratory waterfowl.

A 10-year working agreement, signed last year by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Fish and Wildlife Service, both in the Interior, and the tribal council of the Jicarilla Apache Indians, is one of the first steps in the rehabilitation of this area. The agreement calls for restoration of the food for waterfowl through fencing of the lake to control livestock grazing. The Fish and Wildlife Service will have a technical adviser stationed on the reservation to consult with the Tribal Council on wildlife management problems. The wildlife potential of the reservation, under good management, can be greatly increased.

One of the most important projects on Indian lands, undertaken by the Fish and Wildlife Service, is predator and rodent control. This work materially aids Indians in increasing their food supply. Predator control on the Jicarilla, as an example, has enabled Indian sheep herders to increase their lamb crop by seven percent. Prairie-dog control on the same reservation helps to maintain the range, since the rodents destroy forage and increase erosion by their burrowing.

The initiation of a rodent control program on the Tongue River Reservation was facilitated through the adoption of a cooperative agreement between the Indian Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Northern Cheyenne Tribe of Montana.

Another Apache Indian project is the fish hatchery located at Fort Apache Reservation in northern Arizona. Here, the Williams Creek fish hatchery is being operated through the cooperative efforts of the two Interior Department services, the State of Arizona and the Indian tribal council. Under terms of the agreement, the reservation streams are stocked with fish and the State distributes one-third of the poundage to other non-reservation streams. The Indians also protect the wild turkey and other wildlife resources through the issuance of permits to off-reservation hunters.

Predator and rodent control work, similar to that on the Jicarilla, is being undertaken by the Fish and Wildlife Service on the Fort Apache and San Carlos Reservations in Arizona. Other projects include prairie-dog control on the Rosebud Reservation, South Dakota, and predator control on the Yumatilla and Klamath Reservations in Oregon. Removal of predatory animals -- principally coyotes -- on the Fort Peck Reservation, Montana, has increased survival of deer and antelope fawns. The Fish and Wildlife Service maintains a Game Range at Fort Peck.

On the Red Lake Reservation in Minnesota, approximately 38 miles from Bemidji, the Indians have been operating a commercial fishery as a tribal enterprise for a good many years. The Indians take about 1,250,000 pounds of fish annually, which is sold in the open market. The two Interior Department Bureaus, the State of Minnesota, and the Indians are cooperating in making management recommendations to perpetuate the fishery. A study is now in progress by the Fish and Wildlife Service and the State of Minnesota, in cooperation with the Indians, to determine the best conservation practices. The Indians now have a fish warden on duty.

The Indians of the Grand Portage Reservation, in northeastern Minnesota, have undertaken a conservation project that has materially increased the beaver population on the reservation.

The Indians of the Wind River Reservation, Wyoming, have taken special interest in their wildlife resources. The joint councils of the Shoshone and Arapaho tribes have adopted an outstanding fish and game code to control the taking of fish and game by Indians and non-Indians.

This reservation has some of the best fishing streams and hunting grounds in the state of Wyoming. The principal reservation fish are eastern brook and rainbow trout. The estimated income value of the fish and game taken by Indians and off-reservation fishermen last year was about \$75,000.

The game consists largely of deer, antelope, black bear, elk, moose and bighorn sheep. Predator control on the Wind River Reservation has greatly benefited game animals, although the control of coyotes was primarily to increase income and food through decreased damage to sheep and calves.

A large number of beaver which were damaging an irrigation dam and canal at Rocky Boy's Reservation, Montana, were planted to a favorable site in the Bearpaw Mountain, through the cooperation of the Fish and Wildlife Service and the State Game Commission in live trapping the animals.

"Both Arapaho and Shoshone tribes of the Wind River Reservation, Fort Washakie, Wyoming, are working for the improvement of their resources," according to a recent report by E. W. Barrett, Indian Service range manager. "During the past year of protection, a decided increase was noted in upland birds and antelope. Three tribal members are hired as full time wardens who cover their territory in jeeps."

The Indians of the Colville Reservation, Washington, in cooperation with the two Interior Department Bureaus and the State, have made substantial progress in the conservation of the fish and game on the reservation. The tribal organization has an excellent fish and game code. Through the tribal ordinances the taking of beaver is closely controlled so as to insure a continued increase. Last year approximately 1,800,000 trout were stocked in the streams on the reservation. Through the efforts of the tribal organization, in cooperation with the State and the Federal Government, the wildlife resources at Colville should be materially increased.

A total of 1,963,542 fish were planted in the various streams and lakes of Indian reservations in the Billings, Montana area during the year.

An effort is being made by the Interior Department to encourage enactment and enforcement of fish and game codes on all reservations, not only to maintain existing resources but to increase Indian resources. Under consideration by the Bureau of Indian Affairs now is an agreement between the Pyramid Lake Paiute tribe of Pyramid Lake Reservation, near Reno, Nevada, and the State of Nevada to conduct a long-term experiment to determine if certain species of trout and salmon can live in the lake, whose waters have been lowered by use of the Truckee River for irrigation purposes, resulting in a high salinity in the water.

The Wind River tribes have adopted an outstanding code for the preservation and conservation of tribal fish and game.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service was furnished \$2,500 under an agreement approved by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the head of that Department to make a complete report on the benefits to be derived for fish and wildlife under the construction of the Klickitat Irrigation Project for the Yakima Indians of Washington. The Fish and Wildlife Service will complete its report some time during August 1950.

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